

Upon completion of the proposed project, NCDOT plans to add six daily (three round trip) NCDOT Piedmont Service trains to the NCRR Piedmont Corridor between Charlotte and Raleigh.

The current and future intercity passenger rail trains serve the following nine stations, including five between Charlotte and Greensboro, at Greensboro, High Point, Salisbury, Kannapolis, and Charlotte, and three between Greensboro and Raleigh, including Raleigh, Cary, Durham, and Burlington. Two additional stations are planned on the NCRR Piedmont Corridor, including Lexington between Charlotte and Greensboro, and Hillsborough between Greensboro and Raleigh.

Southeastern High-Speed Rail Corridor (SEHSR) – The proposed project is along the Preferred Alternative for the SEHSR corridor determined by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) in the Record of Decision for the Tier I SEHSR Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). That document analyzed the entire SEHSR corridor from Washington, DC to Charlotte, NC, including numerous alternative alignment combinations and modal choices. Subsequently, NCDOT undertook a Tier II EIS for the middle segment of the SEHSR corridor between Raleigh, NC and Richmond, VA. As of the date of this Environmental Assessment (EA), that document is still being prepared.

For the southern portion of the SEHSR corridor between Charlotte and Raleigh, NCDOT is preparing individual project-level NEPA documents, including this EA. FRA and NCDOT have determined that the individual projects each have independent utility; that is, each project will provide tangible benefits to existing freight and passenger rail service even if no additional investments are made for high speed-service. Regardless of future high-speed rail development, the proposed projects would provide benefits to schedule reliability, train speeds, and overall rail capacity and safety. The respective NEPA documents provide more details on the independent utility of each project.

For the northern portion of the SEHSR corridor between Richmond and Washington, DC, FRA recently announced a \$44.3 million grant to the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) that will fund the completion of preliminary engineering and a Tier II EIS (The SEHSR Tier I EIS and ROD can be found at <http://www.fra.dot.gov/rpd/freight/1611.shtml>).